

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 COA-02 SWF-02 SPC-03 AID-20

EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08

OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00

XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

DRC-01 /179 W

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R 191653Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5351

UNCLAS NASSAU 492

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, EAGER, EFIS,

SUBJECT: GCOB MINISTER OUTLINES MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES

FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHING

1. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES ANTHONY ROBERTS, IN HIS FIRST MAJOR STATEMENT SINCE RE-ASSUMING THAT POST IN JANUARY, HAS ANNOUNCED GOVERNMENT PLANS TO SET UP CO OPERATIVES IN THE AREAS OF FARMING AND FISHING. ROBERTS SAID THAT, THOUGH LEGISLATION NOW IN ITS FIFTH DRAFT, CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS WILL BE ESTABLISHED UNDER A DIRECTOR OF CO OPERATIVES ANSWERABLE TO HIM.

2. ROBERTS IN THE COURSE OF REMARKS TO SHOP STEWARDS' CONVENTION IN NASSAU, ADMITTED THAT "UNTIL THIS PRESENT TIME, IT WOULD SEEM THAT CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHING TO PRODUCE HAS BEEN SADLY LACKING". HE OUTLINED THE MAJOR MARKETING PROBLEMS FACING BAHAMIAN FARMERS AND FISHERMEN, REVEALING THAT OF \$1.5 MILLION IN FOOD PRODUCTS PURCHASED LOCALLY BY THE GCOB DURING 1973, \$300,000 OWRTH WAS UNSUITABLE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION BY THE TIME IT WAS RECEIVED. ROBERTS WENT ON TO SAY THAT GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, WHICH HAD UNCLASSIFIED

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HERETOFORE BEEN NO MORE THAN "LIP SERVICE", WAS

NECESSARY TO ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS TO ENTER THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. HE SAID THAT GOVERNMENT SPONSORED CO-OPERATIVES WERE A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT TO ALLEVIATE MARKETING PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT THE RECENT UN STUDY OF FISHERIES POTENTIAL IN THE BAHAMAS HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING THAT INDUSTRY, THAT THERE WAS NO REASON FOR 2/3 OF BAHAMIAN CRAWFISH TO BE MARKETED IN FLORIDA AS AT PRESENT, AND THAT FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD BE PROVIDED BY RESCINDING THE CURRENT BAN ON EXPORTING SCALE FISH.

3. "EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT COOPERATIVE GROUPS WILL NEED A LOT OF GUIDANCE," ROBERTS SAID, AND EXPLAINED THAT BUREAUCRATS UNDER HIS MINISTRY WOULD ADMINISTER THE VENTURES UNTIL THE CO OPERATIVES THEMSELVES COULD EMPLOY FULL TIME MANAGERS. THIS GOVERNMENT CONTROL WILL ENSURE THAT CO OPERATIVE FUNDS ARE HANDLED PROPERLY, ROBERTS SAID, BUT HE DENIED THAT THEY WOULD BE ADMINISTERED FOR POLITICAL ENDS.

4. ROBERTS PROMISED THAT GOVERNMENT SPONSORED LEGISLATION SETTING UP CO OPERATIVES WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY "IN A FEW WEEKS." EMBASSY WILL ENDEAVOR TO OBTAIN A COPY ASAP.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHING INDUSTRY, MARKETING COOPERATIVES, FARMS, SPEECHES, EXPORT CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NASSAU00492
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740057-1129
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740333/aaaabehf.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUL 2002 by elbezefj>; APPROVED <09 DEC 2002 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GCOB MINISTER OUTLINES MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHING
TAGS: PDEV, EAGR, EFIS, (ROBERTS, ANTHONY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005